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UNCLAS NAIROBI 002089

SIPDIS

DEPT HHS WASHDC PRIORITY

CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY
USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
CJTF HOA PRIORITY
DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC PRIORITY
USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY

AIDAC

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E, AF/EPS, AF/PD, EB, PRM/AF, IO
AID FOR A/AID, AA/DCHA, WGARVELINK, LROGERS, MHESS,
DCHA/OTI
DCHA/OFDA FOR GGOTTLIEB, PMORRIS, CGOTTSCHALK,
KCHANNELL
DCHA/FFP FOR JDWORKEN, JDRUMMOND, TANDERSON, DNELSON
DCHA/PPM FOR SBRADLEY
AID/EGAT FOR AA/EGAT, JSCHAFER, JTURK
AFR/EA FOR JBORNS, SMCCLURE
ADDIS ABABA FOR TIM STUFFT
DJIBOUTI FOR JSCHULMAN
ROME FOR FODAG
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
BRUSSELS FOR PLEARNER
NSC FOR JMELINE, TSHORTLEY

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This is the sixth update cable in response to Ref A request for biweekly reports on the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa. USAID Missions in Kenya and Ethiopia, REDSO (Somalia, Djibouti), and OFDA/ECARO contributed to this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

¶1. In Kenya, initial projections are that the long rains maize harvest will be approximately 25 percent higher than the average. Rapid assessments in three districts indicate a worsening food security situation and food aid beneficiary numbers increased by 81,000. In Ethiopia, the outlook for the region is poor and conditions are expected to deteriorate further, with significant relief not expected until the next long season rains in March/April 2007. In Somalia, heavy rains continued in the drought affected areas. The food security situation remains precarious and malnutrition rates remain well above the emergency threshold levels. Although rains have improved the situation, severe erosion of livelihood assets and destitution is evident and the recovery process will

take several more months. It is likely that more families will cross the border into Kenya in coming months. In Djibouti, water interventions remain limited and high fuel prices are driving up the cost of food, making it unaffordable to the poor.

COUNTRY REPORTS

12. KENYA

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT: Normal and above normal rains reached much of the country during the first week of May, including most drought-affected areas signifying enhanced prospects for recovery. According to the Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP), April rains resulted in regeneration of vegetation, particularly browse, and improved water availability in most pastoral districts. However, heavy downpours in coastal, lakeshore, and localized pastoral areas presented negative effects, including destroyed crops, population displacement, delayed food distribution, and increased risk of diseases, such as malaria, diarrhea, and measles among the human population and pneumonia among the livestock population.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK: Prospects for a good long-rains crop harvest are high following the favorable rains in key growing areas of western, central, southeastern, and southwestern Kenya. Initial projections by the Ministry of Agriculture indicate that the 2006 long rains maize harvest will be approximately 25 percent higher than the average output of 2.18 million metric tons (MT). The livestock market has also responded to the improved forage and water conditions as prices have increased in various pastoral districts by wide margins, ranging between 20-33 percent. Prices had dropped dramatically during the drought due to poor animal conditions and increased supply on the market.

In late March, the Government of Kenya's (GOK) Ministry of Health (MOH) and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) carried out a joint nutritional assessment in Mandera, Marsabit, Moyale, and Samburu districts. Preliminary findings reveal high rates of malnutrition among children under five years of age. Stunting rates in Samburu and Marsabit are reported to be 23.5 and 21.7 percent respectively. The MOH and UNICEF attribute the observed high rates of malnutrition to extended periods of under nutrition, poor health status, and lack of an integrated response to food insecurity and malnutrition.

Rapid assessments carried out by District Steering Groups (DSGs) in Garissa, Mwingi, and Turkana pastoral districts revealed a worsening food security situation. Subsequently, the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) approved an increase in beneficiary numbers in all three districts by an additional 81,000. With this and previous additions, the total number of beneficiaries under the GOK and U.N. World Food Program (WFP) Emergency Operation (EMOP) currently stands at 3.6 million.

From May 9 to 10, a USAID/OFDA team, accompanied by International Medical Corps (IMC) staff, traveled to Samburu District to assess humanitarian conditions, following reports of high malnutrition rates in the district. Rains have fallen in the district, although in varying intensity and in scattered locations. According to IMC, malnutrition increased dramatically during the drought and has stabilized at high rates since the rains began. Regular availability and access to water remains a key concern. The ALRMP district office reports that only 50 percent of the 40 boreholes in the district are currently operational and people

are walking up to 20 kilometers to fetch water, even during the rainy season. USAID/OFDA is reviewing a proposal by IMC to carry out emergency water and nutrition interventions in the district.

OTHER TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST: From April 29 to May 6, the MOH, in concert with UNICEF and the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), conducted a measles immunization campaign in 16 high-risk districts throughout the country, including Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa. During the campaign, children were provided with Vitamin A supplements and polio vaccines. A second phase of the campaign is scheduled for June and will cover the remaining districts. In 2006, USAID/OFDA provided USD 350,000 to UNICEF to carry out emergency nutrition and health interventions.

13. ETHIOPIA

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT:

USAID/OFDA continues to prioritize emergency interventions in pastoralist areas. To augment coordination activities and identify gaps in current response efforts, USAID/OFDA is deploying a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Officer to join the

assessment team in the Horn of Africa. The GIS Coordinator will spend several days in Nairobi before arriving in Addis Ababa, and will provide GIS and information management support for the regional response, meeting with representatives of U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition, USAID/OFDA is working with USAID/Ethiopia, recently arrived USAID Safety and Security Officer, and the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer to assess the security situation and establish a field office in Somali Region.

Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative (PLI) partners continue to implement already approved emergency response activities. Support to commercial off-take of animals, via revolving funds, will continue until the end of May 2006. PLI partners are conducting short impact assessments of emergency response interventions for lessons learned.

PLI partners are now focusing more on development-type activities left behind after the rapid and efficient switch to an emergency response mode. Partners are now conducting animal feed studies, rehabilitation and construction of livestock market infrastructure, and training and technical assistance to community animal health workers. The value chain study was finalized and distributed.

USAID has sent the Ethiopian Government's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), which is the Chair of the PLI Steering Committee, work plans of upcoming activities:

a. Guidelines for the presentation of proposals for capacity building of federal, regional, and local governments. This USD 2 million activity will complement work currently undertaken by PLI NGO partners in the field.

b. U.S. Forestry Service annual work plan to be implemented with federal and regional governments, as well as PLI NGO partners in support of rangeland rehabilitation and management. This activity is worth approximately USD 350,000.

DPPA/WFP PIPELINE AND DONOR RESPONSE UPDATE: As of May 4, the Government of Ethiopia's Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) has reported 83 percent and 90 percent of food allocations were dispatched for Somali Region for February and March respectively. The reported dispatches for Oromiya Region are slightly higher at 96 and 98 percent for February and March.

Concerns remain about the proportion of dispatched food that is distributed to beneficiaries, but WFP and NGOs are redoubling efforts to assist the government in this regard.

Despite significant attention from the Government and donors, as well as near average rainfall in the western and northern zones of Somali Region in April, food security in the affected areas remains precarious. Although government re-assessment of needs in pastoral areas led to an increase in beneficiary numbers, recent rainfall and the prospect of improved water and pasture conditions led the government to reverse the decision to increase the number of food aid recipients. Moreover, food aid shortfalls are expected to increase from July onwards, causing serious concern for drought-affected pastoralists.

UPDATE ON FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK:

According to the USAID-supported Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), current rains have been near normal in Borena Zone, Oromiya Region, and the western part of Somali Region, leading to suspension of water tankering activities. However, rains have been below normal in the eastern part of Somali Region. Based on satellite and field information, FEWS NET suggests that the outlook for the region is poor and conditions are likely to deteriorate further, with significant relief not expected until the next long season rains in March/April 2007.

14. SOMALIA

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT: According to FEWS NET, heavy rains continue in the drought-affected areas of Southern Somalia. Water supply for both humans and livestock has dramatically improved in all of Somalia, prompting large migrations of pastoralists from riverine and farming areas into traditional grazing areas in the hinterland. FEWS NET reports that if rains continue to fall in the upper catchments of the Juba and Shabelle river basins in the Ethiopian Highlands, flooding in Juba and Shabelle valleys is likely. Heavy rains in the south have resulted in the death of already weakened animals, further eroding household assets. Food security analysts continue to emphasize it is too early to make a prediction on the current rainy season, called the Gu season, until mid to late May.

FOOD SECURITY SITUATION: According to USAID-supported Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU), food security situation of the drought-affected populations in Gedo, Juba Valley, Bay, and Bakool regions remains precarious. Although rains have improved the situation, severe erosion of productive assets and destitution are still evident in many parts of Gedo and Middle Juba regions. Due to the negative impact of the drought on livestock, particularly cattle, it is unlikely that pastoralists will have access to livestock products, such as milk and ghee, for several months. Recovery will take several more months even with good rains. According to FEWS NET, increased destitution, inability to access food and income, and increased insecurity have forced over 1,500 people to out-migrate from drought-affected communities in southern Somalia into northeastern Kenya. Given the rapidly deteriorating food security situation in southern Somalia more families will likely cross the border in coming months.

FOOD PIPELINE UPDATE: Fighting in Mogadishu has not impeded shipments of food aid. Three shipments arrived in Somali ports during the current round of fighting. Due to the practice of utilizing Somali transporters for shipping and ground transport, no problems have been reported. The largest shipment of 7,500 MT successfully docked in Merka port on May 10, and is

unloading. Another shipment of 3,100 MT has docked in Kismayo port and a shipment of 2,400 MT is scheduled for arrival at El Ma'an port on May 13, and will be diverted to Kismayo, if necessary.

WFP established an air operation to deliver food to areas affected by heavy rains. Somali transporters are refusing to transport in parts of Gedo, Lower Juba, and Middle Juba regions where roads are inaccessible. WFP has requested USD 900,000 to begin the operation to transport approximately 2,160 MT of food. The cost is approximately triple the price of moving these same commodities by land. The total operation, valued at USD 4 million, seeks to transport 7,000 MT of food by air out of a total of 20,800 MT planned for the next distribution.

According to FEWS NET, prices of sorghum and maize are increasing in most of the reference markets, particularly in drought-affected pastoral, agro-pastoral, and riverine areas. Compared to the same month last year, prices of maize and sorghum in Shabelle Valley are 12 and 14 percent higher, while in Juba Valley cereal prices within the same period are much higher. In Gedo, Bakool, and Bay regions, where humanitarian agencies intensified drought intervention programs, cereal prices showed a decreasing trend. In Gedo Region, cereal prices decreased 20 to 50 percent, while in parts of Bakool Region, maize prices decreased by more than 50 percent over the last two months. Although decreasing prices will likely improve food access, prices are still higher than normal for this time of year.

15. DJIBOUTI

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK:
According to FEWS/NET the food security situation in most of pastoral livelihood zones is improving due to recent rains, but full recovery will require more time and continuous good seasons.

The humanitarian emergency food distributions currently underway by several agencies, including Kuwait Relief Agency, Islamic Development Bank, and WFP, has helped the current food security situation to move out of the emergency mode. However, water interventions remain limited. Reports indicate that nutritional sentinel sites will soon be established to monitor the

nutritional status of most vulnerable groups. Milk production is expected to improve in several livelihood zones which in turn will have a positive effect on the malnutrition of children. In addition to emergency food aid, WFP is carrying out school feeding and food for work programs.

The recent increase in fuel price has impacted the national economy and is negatively affecting the local transport sector. FEWS/NET reports that staple food prices remain high, as 100 percent of the food are imported, resulting in decreased access among poor urban and pastoral communities.

CONCLUSION

16. Although continued rains have improved humanitarian conditions in the region, the situation requires constant monitoring on a case-by-case basis.

BELLAMY